

**COUNTY OF SUFFOLK
DISTRICT ATTORNEY'S OFFICE**



**THOMAS J. SPOTA
DISTRICT ATTORNEY**

February 9, 2011

Court sentences Mount Sinai swindler to two and one-third to seven years

A 47 year old Mount Sinai man convicted of fraud and grand larceny charges in July of last year for swindling friends and neighbors out of nearly \$3 million in a Ponzi scheme was sentenced today to up to seven years in prison in Suffolk County court, Suffolk County District Attorney Thomas Spota said.

Between 2004 and 2006 Diaz victimized financial backers of his water, fire and mold remediation franchise by promising ten to 30 percent returns on their money. Victimized investors included teachers from the local school district, merchants, and his neighbors.

Suffolk District Attorney Thomas Spota said prosecutors recommended Diaz be sentenced to ten to 30 years in an upstate prison, citing his' "lack of remorse, his refusal to take responsibility for his crimes and his premeditated and deliberate theft of nearly \$3 million dollars from his friends and neighbors who trusted him."

"It took years of meticulous work by ADA Rafael Pearl and our forensic accountants to untangle his elaborate deceit, work that eventually proved his guilt beyond a reasonable doubt," DA Spota said. "The evidence clearly established Mr. Diaz spent his investors' money on sports cars, limousines, vacations, and the enormous expenses incurred by his establishment of a prosperous second life in Florida, apart from his wife and children on Long Island. He deserves the maximum prison sentence allowed for his treachery."

An attorney representing Steven Diaz cited the district attorney's recommendation of up to 30 years behind bars as "irresponsible" and implored County Court Judge Gary Weber to sentence the defendant to one year in the county jail, citing the hardship incarceration would have on the Diaz family. The defense also cited as mitigating factors the defendant's history of financial support of school district fundraising efforts.

The Chief Executive Officer, President and Treasurer of the defendant's parent corporation Duraclean International urged the court to sentence Diaz to life imprisonment. In his victim's impact statement, Vincent J. Caffarello described Diaz, who operated the Yaphank Duraclean franchise, as "one of the most talented individuals I have ever known" who "disarmed his victims with a charismatic personality".

“Unfortunately, as it was proven in your court,” Caffarello said, “Steve Diaz used his god-given talent to become a master criminal.”



Steven M. Diaz
DOB: 01-30-1964

SCDA COMMUNICATIONS

Robert.Clifford@suffolkcountyny.gov

A criminal charge is an accusation. A defendant is presumed innocent until and unless proven guilty in a court of law.